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A POSTER, BY HUGH RANKIN.

THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.

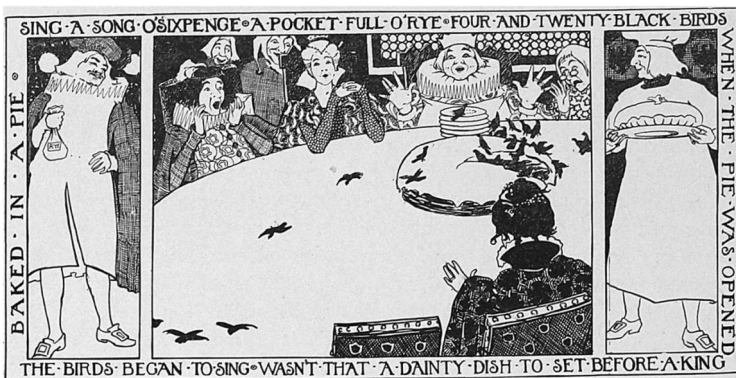
IV.—The Class in Illustration.

THE method of education, especially of art students desiring to become illustrators, the preservation of whose individuality is so important a factor in their work, is a serious problem. The art training which permits neither the unrestrained fancy nor the elevation of technic at the expense of well-grounded training, which seeks to direct the spontaneous art expression rather than create it, showing methods of expression as but means to an end—this would seem to be best. Under the able direction of Mr. Fred Richardson, whose work on the *Chicago Daily News* is so well known, the practical and theoretical sides are happily blended, and the results of his teaching on the general lines suggested above are gratifying and conspicuously successful. Academic training in the other classes is a necessity, and the illustration class is in full harmony with the general scheme of art training as carried on in the school. The catalogue of the school has this to say of the work of this interesting class :

"It should be clearly understood that illustrating in its highest branches implies the full attainment of the artist ; that is, illustrations are pictures studied for special purposes, and often required to be produced with great rapidity and readiness, and under difficult conditions. The manipulation of the special mediums, pen-and-ink, wash, etc., is an insignificant element compared with the general power of drawing and an acquaintance with the principles of drawing.

"The whole training of the school, therefore, is a direct preparation for illustrating, and, in consequence, a considerable number of advanced students are always actually engaged in illustrating publications of various kinds. A severe course of drawing is an absolute necessity, and the effort to become an illustrator by learning commercial methods of handling the pen must of necessity fail."

This class was formed four years ago to meet the demands of a number of students desiring technical instruction in the art of drawing for book and newspaper illustration, and a practical knowledge of the various engraving processes. It has now gradually changed, or rather broadened its aim, so that the present mode of work is the direct outcome of more worthy individual effort and needs. Starting with great attention to technical practices and allegiance to rule, the class has gradually reduced the importance of the former (as special classes for technical training in pen, pencil, wash, monochrome, gouache, etc., supply this need), while of the latter little is heard, except perhaps at the beginning of the school year, when a general statement of the more important academic theories governing the subject are given.



A MOTHER GOOSE MELODY, BY L. BEULAH MITCHELL.



PENCIL SKETCH, BY BELLE SILVEIRA.

The work of the class progresses through learning by endeavor and observation, by watching the work of the more advanced students, the exchange of ideas, the contagious energy of the class and through the criticisms of the instructor.

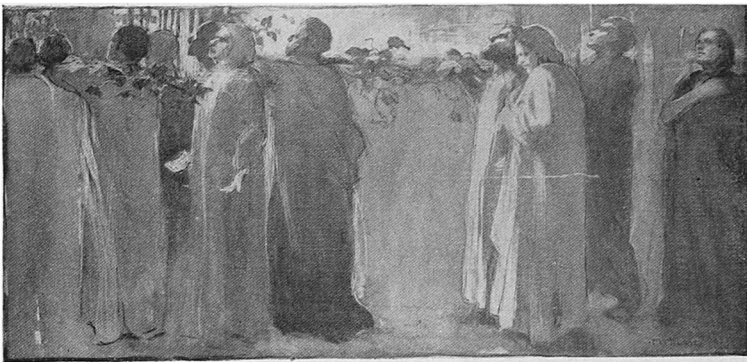
The class is self-governed and meets twice a week to receive criticisms on compositions, the subject for which being selected by the students at a previous session of the class. The subjects for composition are decided on with reference to their value as practical problems liable to be met by the illustrator, painter or decorator. Designs for posters, book covers, wall decorations, etc., are studied during the school year. Subjects are looked for that will allow the greatest variety in decorative effect, for action, repose, sentiment and the emotions.

Compositions are presented in all stages of completion, from the hasty memoranda to the more pretentious study in color. None fail to receive a criticism so long as right effort and thought are shown.

It is natural in a school whose training is a direct preparation for illustrating, that many of the best students should be found in a class of this character ; consequently its personnel is made up largely of students who are actually engaged in illustrating publications of various kinds, and in many cases with success.

Organized and continued under the direction of Mr. Richardson, the class has stimulated and elevated the composition work in the other classes of the Institute to a very gratifying extent.

Composition (the law of design) is always a weak point in schools. The persistent labor of instructor and pupils is bearing fruit, and the right understanding of composition is being developed throughout the whole Institute by the work done in the illustration class, with the result that where the school has heretofore been conspicuously weak, it is now, thanks to the labors of Mr. Richardson, commendably strong.



AUTUMNAL PROCESSION, BY MYRTLE MCLANE.